AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method of machining a flange of a wheel arch to bend said flange of said wheel arch of a vehicle body, comprising the steps of:

conveying a general-purpose actuator to a machining position for said flange with a moving mechanism while a dedicated die is being mounted on said general-purpose actuator provided on said moving mechanism; and

actuating said general-purpose actuator to bring said dedicated die into abutment against said flange and to cause said dedicated die to bend said flange,

wherein a machining station for bending said flange is included in a welding station for welding said vehicle body,

wherein said general-purpose actuator provided on said moving mechanism is replaceable with a welding mechanism for welding said vehicle body, and

wherein said welding mechanism is mounted on said moving mechanism at said welding station, whereas said general-purpose actuator is mounted on said moving mechanism at said machining station.

Claim 2 (currently amended): ~~A method~~The method of machining a flange

according to claim 1, wherein said ~~flanges of respective wheel arches on both sides of said vehicle body can be bent substantially simultaneously when at least a pair of said moving mechanisms disposed respectively on both sides~~ wheel arch including said flange is provided on each side of said vehicle body and wherein each flange can be bent simultaneously with said moving mechanism disposed on each side of said vehicle body is actuated.

Claim 3 (currently amended): ~~A method~~The method of machining a flange according to claim 1, wherein said dedicated die is selected depending on the shape of said flange and the selected dedicated die is removably mounted on said general-purpose actuator.

Claim 4 (cancelled)

Claim 5 (currently amended): A method of machining a flange of a wheel arch to bend said flange of said wheel arch of a vehicle body, comprising the steps of:

providing a base, a first slide means slidably mounted on said base, a workpiece guide means disposed on said first slide means, a second slide means slidably mounted on said base, a workpiece rest means disposed on said second slide means, and a mutual distance changing means;

disposing workpiece guide means with a predetermined clearance provided on an outer surface of said flange of said wheel arch and disposing workpiece rest means with a predetermined clearance provided on an inner surface of said flange

of said wheel arch;

moving ~~said workpiece guide means and said workpiece rest means closely to~~ said first slide means and said second slide means towards each other to dispose said workpiece guide means on the outer surface of said flange and to dispose said workpiece rest means on the inner surface of said flange; ~~and~~

bending said flange with workpiece bending means while said workpiece guide means is holding the outer surface of said flange and said workpiece rest means is holding the inner surface of said flange; and

moving said first slide means and said second slide means away from each other.

Claim 6 (currently amended): An apparatus for machining a flange of a wheel arch to bend said flange of said wheel arch of a vehicle body), comprising:

a moving mechanism for conveying a general-purpose actuator to a machining position for said flange, with said general-purpose actuator provided on said moving mechanism; and

a dedicated die replaceably mounted on said general-purpose actuator, for bending said flange when said general-purpose actuator is actuated,

wherein a machining station for bending said flange is included in a welding station for welding said vehicle body,

wherein said general-purpose actuator provided on said moving mechanism is replaceable with a welding mechanism for welding said vehicle body, and

wherein said welding mechanism is mounted on said moving mechanism at said welding station, whereas said general-purpose actuator is mounted on said

moving mechanism at said machining station.

Claim 7 (currently amended): ~~An apparatus~~The apparatus for machining a flange according to claim 6, wherein ~~at least one of~~ said moving ~~mechanisms~~ mechanism is disposed on ~~both sides~~ each side of said vehicle body, for substantially simultaneously bending said ~~flanges of respective wheel arches on both sides~~ flange of said wheel arch on each side of said vehicle body.

Claim 8 (currently amended): ~~An apparatus~~The apparatus for machining a flange according to claim 6, comprising a plurality of dedicated dies selectable depending on the shape of said flange.

Claim 9 (cancelled)

Claim 10 (currently amended): ~~An apparatus~~The apparatus for machining a flange according to ~~claim 9~~ claim 6, comprising a dedicated die replacing section disposed outside of an operating range of said machining station, with a plurality of said dedicated dies being stockable in said dedicated die replacing section.

Claim 11 (previously presented): An apparatus for machining a flange of a wheel arch to bend said flange of said wheel arch of a vehicle body, comprising:

a base;

first slide means slidably mounted on said base, with workpiece guide means being disposed on said first slide means;

second slide means slidably mounted on said base, with workpiece rest means and workpiece bending means being disposed on said second slide means; and

mutual distance changing means for moving said first slide means and said second slide means toward and away from each other.

Claim 12 (currently amended): ~~An apparatus~~The apparatus for machining a flange according to claim 11, wherein said workpiece guide means has a nonmetallic pad disposed in a workpiece abutment region thereof.

Claim 13 (currently amended): ~~An apparatus~~The apparatus for machining a flange according to claim 11, wherein said mutual distance changing means has a cylinder coupled to said first slide means and said second slide means.

Claim 14 (new): The apparatus for machining a flange according to claim 11 further comprising a general-purpose actuator, wherein said workpiece bending means is replaceably mounted on said general-purpose actuator, and wherein when said general-purpose actuator is actuated said workpiece bending means cooperates with said workpiece rest means to bend said flange.

Claim 15 (new): The apparatus for machining a flange according to claim 14 further comprising a moving mechanism disposed on each side of the vehicle body, wherein said base is mounted to each moving mechanism to thereby substantially simultaneously bend said flange on each wheel arch on each side of said vehicle

body.

Claim 16 (new): The method of claim 5 , wherein said workpiece bending means is replaceably mounted to a general-purpose actuator and wherein prior to the step of bending said flange with workpiece bending means while said workpiece guide means is holding the outer surface of said flange and said workpiece rest means is holding the inner surface of said flange, the method further comprises the step of actuating said general-purpose actuator such that said workpiece bending means cooperates with said workpiece rest means to bend said flange.

Claim 17 (new): The method of claim 16, wherein said base is mounted on a moving mechanism disposed on each side of the vehicle body, the method further comprising the step of substantially simultaneously bending said flange on each wheel arch on each side of said vehicle body.